

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-11 SAM-01 SCS-03 SCA-01

SCCT-01 EB-07 COME-00 OPR-02 SY-05 A-01 DHA-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 /114 W

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P R 291010Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3735

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USUN NY 605

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AG, SS, MO, BGEN, CPRSOJ

SUBJ: SECURITY SITUATION ALONG AL

GERIAN-MOROCCAN

BORDER AND ALGERIAN COMMENTS

1. EMBASSY WAS CONTACTED LATE JAN 28 BY DRAVO CORPORATION ALGIERS OFFICE REQUESTING GUIDANCE ON POSSIBLE DANGER TO AMERICAN CITIZEN WORKERS AND DEPENDENTS AT DRAVO'S MINING SITE AT EL ABED, ABOUT 60 KM SOUTHWEST OF TLEMCEN. CAMP SITE IS ONE KM FROM BORDER AND HOUSES 15 AMERICAN CITIZENS AND 50 CANADIAN CITIZENS. DRAVO TOLD EMBASSY ITS PEOPLE WERE IN A STATE OF ALARM BECAUSE OF WAR RUMORS AND HAD PACKED THEIR BAGS. DRAVO REQUESTED EMBASSY ASSESSMENT AS TO NEED TO EVACUATE DEPENDENTS FROM CAMP SITE. THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE ALGERIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA OF THE SITE.

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2. CHARGE TALKED TO ABERKANE, CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT OF

NORTH AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND ASKED WHAT ADVICE HE COULD GIVE ON SITUATION FACING AMERICANS AND CANADIANS AT EL ABED.

3. ABERKANE STATED THERE IS "NO REASON" TO BE ALARMED "AT PRESENT TIME." HE SAID WHILE FUTURE EVENTS ARE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT, MOROCCO AND ALGERIA ARE NOT AT WAR. JAN 27 INCIDENT WAS FAR FROM EL ABED AND AMERICANS AND CANADIANS THERE HAVE RESPONSIBLE ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES NEAR THERE WITH WHOM THEY SHOULD TALK. THESE AUTHORITIES ARE AWARE OF THE SITUATION AND WILL TAKE CARE OF CIVILIANS IF THERE IS ANY NEED. ABERKANE URGED PERSONNEL GO QUIETLY ABOUT THEIR WORK AS HE DID NOT THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

4. DRAVO HAS BEEN TOLD EMBASSY SEES NO IMMEDIATE NEED TO EVACUATE DEPENDENTS AND THAT MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS URGING BUSINESS AS USUAL. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE SAID TENSIONS LIKELY TO REMAIN HIGH AND WORSENING SITUATION A POSSIBILITY. WHETHER IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF ITS EMPLOYEES TO WITHDRAW MOST DISTURBED DEPENDENTS TEMPORARILY TO ORAN, HE SAID UP TO DRAVO TO DECIDE; AND THAT EMBASSY WILL NOTIFY DRAVO IF IT IS BELIEVED AMERICAN CITIZENS IN DANGER.

5. WE HAVE CONFERRED WITH CANADIAN EMBASSY AND IT TAKING SIMILAR SIMULTANEOUS APPROACH. SOVIETS REPORT THAT OUT OF CONCERN FOR SOVIET TECHNICIANS SPREAD OUT ALONG ALGERIA'S WESTERN BORDER THEY POSED SAME QUESTION TO FOREIGN MINISTRY, RECEIVED IDENTICAL ANSWER, AND HAVE PASSED SIMILAR ADVICE AS OURS TO THEIR PERSONNEL. FRENCH REPORT THEY DID NOT BOTHER TO ASK FOREIGN MINISTRY BUT SIMPLY ISSUED SIMILAR ADVICE ON THEIR OWN.
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